

# PRESS RELEASE

## Sodexo launches 'Five Foodie Days' menu in primary schools

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Leading services company Sodexo has expanded its modern school food brand, Food & Co. by Sodexo, to state primary schools.

'**Five Foodie Days**' is specifically designed for primary school children and offers a modern, fresh approach to school food. All 66 primary schools where Sodexo provides catering are being transferred onto the new menu.

Sodexo conducted research among pupils in key stage 2-4 across the UK to find out about the food they want to eat as well as why, when and how they wanted to eat it.

The results highlighted that pupils would like to:

- eat high street style food that includes their favourite choices
- enjoy a 'high street' experience, offering a more 'grown up' feel
- try new foods from different countries and cultures
- customise their meals by choosing from tasty sauces on the side to add extra flavour.

The research outcomes reflect the latest insights into market trends showing pupils today are brand-savvy, active consumers of high street food and have more sophisticated palates than ever before. (Mintel 2017):

- 72% of children aged 7-15 want to try food that they haven't eaten before
- 68% agree they would like to eat food they have seen in adverts and the high street
- 33% read food labels, actively choosing healthier choices; doing so is perceived to be 'cool'
- 93% of children think it is important to have a healthy diet and look out for food that is nutritious.

**Five Foodie Days** is designed to reflect the research outcomes with each day following a different theme: planet earth, street food, world food, originals and Friday favourites. Dishes on the new menu reflect high street trends and favourites which link to the five foodie themes.

In a move away from the traditional school dining experience and to offer KS2 pupils a 'high street' experience, food will be served in a box twice per week.

**Matt Garner, managing director for Schools, Sodexo said:** "We wanted to do things differently. Feedback from head teachers, parents and pupils highlighted the need for us to be more innovative and look to provide more cosmopolitan meal choices at an affordable price whilst continuing to meet the government school food standards. It was a big ask, but we believe that our Five Foodie Days does all of this and more.

"We've co-produced Food & Co. by Sodexo with pupils to ensure it meets the needs and expectations of today's generation. The look and feel of our brand, and more importantly the dishes

*featured on our Five Foodie Days menu, have been truly pupil-led and have turned traditional school dinners on their head.”*

To ensure pupil engagement, Sodexo has introduced the “Agents for Change” initiative. Pupils are recruited from Years 5 and 6 to be representatives of their peer group as well as advocates for the new menus. They are invited to taste the new food, feedback and work with the kitchen team to encourage KS1 and KS2 pupils to taste and learn about new foods. The Agents also help with surveys to ensure the cooks receive regular feedback as they introduce the new menu to pupils and their families.

**Ms Elliott, principal of Oasis Academy Pinewood, where the new Five Foodie Days Menu was piloted, said:** *“Both the pupils and staff have welcomed the changes to the menu. Being able to try different food and tastes from around the world, helped to generate pupils’ interest and staff could leverage this by linking to the curriculum.*

*“I particularly like the Agents of Change initiative which provided an opportunity for pupils to learn how to be part of a team, build confidence and encourage pupils to talk to each other.”*

With the new term just beginning, early signs are that pupils are enjoying the new school food. The novelty of being able to have their lunch in a box has been well received by pupils, who say it makes them feel grown up.

**Matt continued;** *“We are aware that Five Foodie Days is a significant shift from what schools and parents expect from school catering. To support our staff to deliver the new menu, we have introduced flexible training methods to ensure our chefs and kitchen teams are confident in their abilities as well as to develop their skills.*

*“We have worked with our schools to inform parents on the new Five Foodie Day menu in advance of it being introduced. This has included producing a parent newsletter to provide details of the new menu. We have also encouraged our schools to host parent events, providing them with an opportunity to taste food from the new menus, hear about the reasoning behind the changes and be able to ask questions.”*

Sodexo currently works with nearly 200 schools in the state and independent sectors and has over 10 years’ experience delivering integrated facilities services to schools across the UK and Ireland. The new offer is designed to meet the needs of multi academy trusts and local authorities who are increasingly looking for suppliers who can offer greater standardisation and integration of services across their school estates.

**Ends**